

Idaho Early Learning Guidelines

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Domain 1: Approaches to Learning and Cognition

I. Introduction

The Approaches to Learning domain covers the inclinations, dispositions, attitudes, habits, and styles that reflect the diverse ways that children involve themselves in learning. This domain is not about what skills children acquire, but how they construct meaning and how children orient themselves to learning a wide range of skills. Families, communities, early childhood caregivers, researchers, and policy makers regard *Approaches to Learning and Cognition* as a critical domain for children’s learning and school readiness. The widespread acknowledgement of the importance of this domain is prompting researchers and scientists to pursue studies to gain understanding in this dimension of development.

The manner in which children approach learning is influenced by characteristics such as gender and temperament, and by attitudes, inclinations, experiences and expectations fostered early in life through family, and community, cultural patterns and values. Current brain research is expanding our understanding of cognition and how brain structures develop and respond to relationships, stress and stimulation. Approaches to Learning and Cognition are at the core of social, emotional, and cognitive interactions.

Idaho has chosen to link Approaches to Learning with the development of cognitive processes. The compelling research in cognitive psychology and brain development are expanding our understanding about “how “and “when” the complexities of thinking and learning develop. The focus moves beyond looking at the development of brain structures and functions and encompasses the growth of the mind. The adult work is to support children in this process of active self- organization that creates new knowledge and understanding from everyday experiences.

II. Rationale

This first Domain, Approaches to Learning and Cognition, frame the child’s entire being and are interrelated with all other aspects of development. They are the platform on which learning takes place and include attributes which predispose children toward success in school and in life. A narrow focus on skills and knowledge as the end product of education may undermine children’s capacity to figure out a problem, apply their skills and make larger meanings. By nurturing and supporting children’s unique approaches to learning, adults help children use their current knowledge and understanding of their world as a basis for creating meaningful new experiences and ideas.

III. General Definitions

Children’s approaches to learning include their motivation, attitudes, habits, and cognitive styles that are demonstrated as they engage in learning and respond to different situations. Even though the ways in which children express their approaches to learning may vary according to their temperament or cultural contexts, the following goals are essential for children’s success in school and in life. For the purposes of the Idaho Early Learning Guidelines, the Approaches to Learning and Cognition Domain includes:

- **Curiosity and Interest** indicates children’s sense of inquisitiveness, interest in pursuing new information, keenness for new knowledge, and desire to learn.
- **Initiative** indicates children’s willingness to take on tasks, volunteer to participate in learning activities, and take reasonable risks in learning new information.
- **Persistence and Attentiveness** indicates children’s ability to stay with and concentrate attention to complete a task without being easily distracted or overly frustrated. Sometimes persistence is demonstrated by leaving a project and returning later for more work or elaboration.
- **Creativity and Invention** indicates children’s ability to extend existing knowledge; using imagination and moving beyond conventional thinking into forms and images not present within the current context; to have a “great idea” and busily make it happen.
- **Reflection and Interpretation** indicates children’s ability to absorb, think about, compare, question, and understand knowledge and information to inform future actions and learning.
- **Concept Formation** indicates children’s ability to imitate and remember people, routines, information and objects from prior experience. It includes the important stages of object permanence and sequences.
- **Reasoning and Logic** indicates children’s growing skills to create and analyze attributes (similarities, differences and associations between objects, events and people. These goals include causation, critical; and analytical thinking, and problem solving. These skills are among the most complex kind of knowledge and understanding and among the most difficult to describe, observe and assess.
- **Representational Thought and Play** indicates children’s expanding ability to explore actions and sensory experiences and make the great leap from the concrete to abstraction. Pretending is a complex form of intellectual activity and a critical element in symbolic thinking and the symbolization process. Play is both the means and manifestation of children’s growing understanding of the world and their roles within their culture.

IV. Supporting Individual Differences, Language, and Diversity

A discussion about *Approaches to Learning* acknowledges that children learn and express themselves in different ways. Adults need to sensitively observe young children as they approach new situations and objects. Some children look and watch, seeming to figure out the situation before they move to engage. Other children may have great tactile sensitivity and use touch to explore or hold back from new sensations. Skilled caregivers appreciate and value the diversity of children, families and cultures, and strive to observe, understand, and support each child as an individual. Parents and caregivers can create supportive environments in which all children are allowed to take risks, try new ideas and in which creative processes of learning and expressing self are nurtured and valued, with less emphasis on finished products. Caregivers, who use children’s current knowledge and understanding of their world to build on that knowledge, help children create meaning from new experiences, relationships and concepts.

Children with differing abilities, with developmental delays, or who are at risk for developmental delays or with special talents, may require special attention and adaptations to foster their engagement in learning. In order to achieve their full potential, young children who experience delays or have disabilities, gain significant benefits from participation in early intervention programs that provide center-based or home-based education, guidance, natural environments, and family support. Parents and caregivers should employ principles of interactive play and interactive learning with all children in inclusive classroom; paying attention to their differing dispositions, abilities, and experiences to learn together.

Children are exposed to varying cultural patterns and values in their immediate context of family as well as in the neighborhood, community, and environment at large. At the family level, differences in child-rearing practices, including parental behaviors of instruction, modeling, and responses to children’s initiatives, influence children’s learning approaches. Culture may influence children’s work styles, the way they approach and interpret experiences, and their orientation to action or reflection. Some cultures encourage children to be obedient and respectful of adult opinions while other cultures encourage children to question and dialogue with adults. Cultural patterns may also influence the way children learn. For example, some cultural settings promote learning through hands-on manipulation of materials, while others focus on visual representation, and still others focus on oral traditions of story telling or more structured interactions. Whatever the cultural influence on children’s predispositions, all learning styles should be embraced as equal, valued, and respected approaches to learning.

Guidelines
SUBDOMAIN: LEARING APPROACHES

Curiosity, Motivation, Exploration, and Experimentation. Goal 1: *Children are curious about and interested in learning new things, experimenting and having new experiences.*

Early Learning Guidelines	Birth to 8 months	6 to 18 months	16 to 38 months	36 to 60 months	60 months through Kindergarten	First, Second, and Third Grades
Developmental Task	Respond to people with curiosity.	Respond with increasing curiosity to objects and their traits.	Are curious, which fuels increasing complex, deliberate exploration of people and objects.	Become more inquisitive, seeking information to build their understanding.	Acquire the ability to abstract, showing increased interest for more abstract and complex information about people and things.	Can hypothesize and test out theories to more independently satisfy their curiosity about people and things and engage others in the process.
Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Show interest in people by changing behavior• React to new voices or sounds by turning in the direction of sound, becoming more quiet or active, or changing facial expressions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Show interest, explore, manipulate, or stare at new objects in the environment• Use all senses to explore the environment (reaching out to touch rain)• Observe things that are new	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explore their immediate environment (ask about a new object they find, actively search through collections of toys)• Show interest in new and others' activities• Ask simple "wh" questions (why, what, where)• Ask about people in their own environment• Are interested in how things work• Like to make choices	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ask others for information (What is that? Why is the moon round?)• Investigate and experiment with materials• Show interest in how and why others do things• Use "why" to get additional information about how their world works• Develop personal interests (trains, farm animals)• Develop sense of competence by actively engaging in play and learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Engage in discussions about new events and occurrences (Why did this happen?)• Ask questions about changes in their world• Show enthusiasm for field trips and other outings to new places• With assistance, look for new information and want to know more about personal interests• Use available tools to explore• Use multiple strategies to explore a new situation or object	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explore self-directed interests• Look for new information• Know where to find needed information, including seeking adult help• Place more emphasis on the process• Extend and elaborate with the help of peers
Strategies for Caregivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create a safe, secure, and stimulating environment for children to explore• Play with children individually every day• Observe children to understand their unique temperaments, learning styles, and ways of showing curiosity• Introduce children to new people, places, objects, and experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide support and time for children who are hesitant about new objects and experiences• Play with children using objects with different textures, sounds, and shapes• When out in the community, describe new places and what people are doing• Read a variety of books and tell stories to children every day	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make children's surroundings safe and inviting to encourage them to explore• To increase interest, provide children with a variety of safe objects/toys that can be used in multiple ways• Interact with children by asking simple questions and responding to his/her questions• Wonder aloud with children about why things happen• When on walks with children, describe and talk about what you see around you• Read and tell diverse stories that introduce children to many people, places, and cultures• Understand that children with a shy temperament may not demonstrate curiosity in the same ways as other children	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide opportunities and time for children to explore a variety of activities and materials, including those in the larger community and those from diverse cultures• Identify and build on children's individual interests• Provide a variety of stimulating, open-ended materials reflecting children's expressed interests, and self-directed time to use them• Provide opportunities for children to explore ideas and ask questions• Help children find answers to their own questions by exploring together and asking open-ended questions (I wonder...? How could that work? What do you think about...? Or What ideas do you have?)• Play question-and-answer games that inspire children's curiosity• Read a variety of nonfiction books on topics of interest to the children, such as trucks, insects or gardening, to demonstrate the diverse sources where people find information	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Build on children's interests by providing books, videos, field trips, and other experiences related to similar topics• Provide children with opportunities to use resources to answer questions (If a child wonders about dinosaurs, find a dinosaur book at the library or if possible, search a child-appropriate website together)• Provide opportunities for children to learn about families and their surrounding environment• Provide opportunities for children to observe and listen to adult conversations about why things happen• Encourage children to invent make-believe stories	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understand that children have different learning styles and abilities and provide learning opportunities that engage all• Facilitate self-directed learning and problem solving and provide thematic lessons that involve learning concepts through different modalities (visual, auditory, tactile, etc.)• Build on their interests by providing opportunities and time for children to collaborate with peers on group projects of interest to them• Read a variety of books that interest the children, both fiction and nonfiction• Encourage children to talk about their discoveries and discuss their ideas with others• Provide opportunities for children to observe and listen to adult presentations on topics of interest

Creativity and Inventiveness. Goal 2: *Children are able to generate new ideas, approaches and activities in daily routines.*

Early Learning Guidelines	Birth to 8 months	6 to 18 months	16 to 38 months	36 to-60 months	60 months through Kindergarten	First, Second, and Third Grades
Developmental Task	Using all of their senses, actively explore themselves and their immediate surroundings.	Experiment creatively with objects by trying different things.	Use imagination and pretend play to fuel playful experimentation with objects and roles.	Expand personal expression through inventive language and play.	Become more elaborate and cooperative in creative expression.	Can problem-solve more effectively and generate new ideas and multiple solutions with increasingly logical and systematic mental abilities and perspective taking.
Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inspect their own hands and feet (by mouthing)• Mouth, shake, bang, drop, or throw objects	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Imitate actions observed in another situation (try to stack blocks after watching other children, bang on a surface after watching drumming at a cultural event)• Use objects differently and creatively (a bucket is turned upside down to build a tower or be a pedestal)• Look to caregiver for assurance when trying something new or risky	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Invent new uses for everyday materials (bang on pots and pans)• Approach tasks experimentally, adapting as the activity evolves• Display understanding of how objects work together (get the dustpan when an adult is sweeping the floor)• Enjoy opportunities for pretend play and creating things• Use creative language to describe events—sometimes with silly sounds• Build with blocks and other manipulatives• Play with dolls, costumes, and act out roles	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Invent new activities or games• Use imagination to create a variety of ideas• Create and negotiate acceptable rules for group activities• Makeup words, songs, or stories• Express ideas through art, construction, movement, or music• Engage in extensive pretend play that includes role play (play house or explorers)• Engage in open-ended exploration of raw materials (messy play)• Use materials in a new or novel way• Choose new and different materials to represent thoughts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use dramatic or symbolic play to pretend• Combine activities, materials, and equipment in new ways (build tent by using a sheet or blanket around a table)• Complete projects differently from other children (use a unique approach in block structures and paintings)• Make changes to a familiar story by adding actions or characters• Represent reality in a variety of ways (pretend play, drawing)• Approach tasks and experiences with increased flexibility, imagination, and inventiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Relate their activities in the past, present and future, engaging in "what if?" scenarios• Generate multiple solutions to problems/projects• Generate creative solutions in conjunction with their peers• Take into account others' views• Strive to represent reality and demonstrate understanding of how the world works

Strategies for Caregivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Play with infants individually every day• Provide toys and experiences with a variety of colors, textures, sounds, shapes, and smells• Change the materials, toys, and objects in infant's environment regularly	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide children time and opportunities to be spontaneous, silly, and messy• Play with children in creative ways (using soft toys to create a puppet show, tell imaginative stories using familiar characters and the local environment)• Reassure child to try something new and safe• Provide time and materials for sensory exploration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Model use of a variety of familiar and new learning materials and activities• Provide children with art materials and a place to use them without adult created models or specific instructions• Allow children to mix toys or materials• Provide opportunities for children to remain absorbed in play• Engage children in creating using different media (clay, collage, paint, music, dance, block construction)• Encourage children to talk about and revisit their creative work• Use open-ended questions and descriptive language when interacting with children• Ensure children have props from their own culture to support pretend play• Encourage children to pretend, make-believe, and use their imagination	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create an environment and a range of materials where children are encouraged to experiment and use their imagination• Ask open-ended questions to encourage creative thinking• Provide tasks where the goal is trying different strategies rather than right or wrong answers• Ask children how a story may have ended differently (What if...?)• Provide opportunities for children to create and complete projects in their own way• Engage children in creating and completing projects using different media (clay, collage, paint, music, dance, chalk, box construction)• Demonstrate and explain how to be flexible about changes in routines and plans (provide more structure for children with special needs)• Provide children with access to artists and artwork from their own and other cultures• Maintain files of creative work for children to periodically revisit and comment on• Display a variety of children's creative work instead of mass-produced or teacher-created display• Engage children in drawing a series of pictures that represent or illustrate experience or a story they have made up	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Play make-believe games with children, including games that introduce the child to diverse people, places, and cultures (If you were a frog, what would you think about the rain outside?)• Ask open-ended questions that create an interaction and dialogue with children (What do you think about...?)• Provide a variety of creative outlets for children (opportunities to dance, paint, build, make music, invent stories and act them out)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide experience with different materials (computer graphics, paper-mache', oil paints, music and language)• Provide opportunities for children to create objects of their own choosing by experimentation with materials• Use visual arts along with curriculum, and for learning about other cultures• Ask children to develop their own stories and poems• Ask children to work on projects together
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Confidence and Initiative. Goal 3: *Children are confident to initiate and complete activities using a variety of approaches.*

Early Learning Guidelines	Birth to 8 months	6 to 18 months	16 to 38 months	36 to 60 months	60 months through Kindergarten	First, Second, and Third Grades
Developmental Task	Eagerly engage in interactions and explore people and objects around them.	Seek out familiar people and objects to engage in pleasurable activities.	Begin to take some initiative in selecting activities and seeking out new experiences with familiar people, objects, and settings.	Display increased initiative and confidence interacting in a wider variety of social and physical settings.	Initiate and sustain play with confidence through increased personal and shared interests.	Sustain work more autonomously and begin to contribute to group efforts. Use rules and conventions to help them carry activities out to conclusion.
Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hold the attention of caregivers (smile, babble, sustain eye-contact)• Direct attention towards objects by reaching, grasping, or staring at them• Examine a face, toy, or rattle for a brief period of time• Repeat simple motions or activities (swat at a mobile, consistently reach for objects)• Engage familiar adults and children in interactions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Remember where favorite items are stored• Focus on the reader or storyteller for brief periods of time• Try different ways of doing things• Are willing to try a new activity or a familiar activity in a new setting• Express the desire to feed themselves• Engage in and actively explore new surroundings• Select a book, toy, or item from several options• Look to their caregiver /parent for reassurance and move away to try a new activity• Show likes and dislikes for activities, experiences, and interactions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Initiate play with others• Respond with “no!” or “mine!” when someone takes a toy• Choose one activity over another and pursue it for a brief period of time• Propose an idea for how to spend time• Show interest in wanting to take care of themselves (dressing)• Initiate activities at their caregivers’ suggestions• Seek and take pleasure in both new and familiar skills and experiences• Pretend to be in new and familiar places with new and familiar roles• Are willing to try less familiar environments and situations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ask a peer to join in play• Join a play activity already in progress, with assistance• Select new activities during play time (select characters for dress up)• Offer to help with chores (sweeping sand from the floor, helping to clean up spilled juice)• Find and use materials to follow through on an idea (blocks for building a tower, blank paper, and crayons for drawing about a story or experience)• Make decisions about what activity or materials to work with from the selection offered	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Choose to work on a project because the activity is of personal interest• Invent projects and work on them with little assistance• Form a plan for an activity and act on it• Tell the difference between appropriate and inappropriate (or dangerous) risk-taking, with assistance• Choose to leave a project and return to it later for completion or elaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have an emerging sense of self competence or self confidence in certain situations (social, physical, cognitive)• May exhibit learned helplessness (believe they cannot influence the world around them)• Are aware of gender and cultural differences in perceived competence• Show assertiveness toward rules and social conventions (Older children can resolve conflicts between groups.)• Begin to enjoy shared interests with peers, and achieving mutual understanding of situations• Can take initiative in selecting activities and approaches to problems• Are able to sustain interest in and return to a creative project over time

Strategies for Caregivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Play with children individually every day• Follow children's lead and/or choices in daily activities• Provide opportunities for simple exploration on back and tummy with supervision	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide opportunities for children to choose toys to play with and books to read• Provide opportunities for children to take reasonable and safe risks (to stretch for an object beyond reach)• Provide many opportunities for active exploration and doing; discourage watching television or videos• Encourage child to try something new—a texture, taste, movement, object	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide time for children to engage in sustained activities, to be on toddler time• Respond to children's requests for assistance• Limit environmental distractions to help children sustain attention to activities (Turn television off while children play in the room.)• Talk with children about their activities using open-ended questions (How did you do that? Tell me more.)• Try new tasks with child and describe them• Provide and support child's choices during daily activities (choosing a books, cup, toy)• Help child feel safe and capable of trying something new or taking reasonable risks in a variety of settings• Direct concerns about children's behavior or development to a medical or developmental expert (in partnership with the families)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encourage children to pursue favorite activities• Demonstrate and explain to children that taking reasonable risks is acceptable• Facilitate play in groups, offer props to extend play• Modify group activities to ensure participation of children with special needs• Acknowledge when children initiate pro-social activities and point out the positive outcomes• Provide noncritical environments that create opportunities for children to initiate activities• Recognize that children may not demonstrate and express initiative in the same way in all settings (may take initiative with peers but not in presence of elders)• Create opportunities to "save" art, blocks, or process activities so children can return to them later	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide opportunities for children to set and pursue goals• Encourage children to follow through on own interests or projects• Create projects for children to work on over time (planting seeds and nurturing them to watch them grow)• Provide opportunities for children to take on activities or responsibilities that last more than one day (feeding the gerbil this week)• Provide adequate time and support for children to complete increasingly complex games or tasks• Provide opportunities for children to work successfully together on complex projects• Provide opportunities for children to join other children playing• Provide opportunities for children to play by themselves and with others• Encourage children to follow through on own interests• Provide opportunities for children to interact with a variety of people (peers, elders, shopkeepers, neighbors)• Provide opportunities for children to form, design, and undertake activities and projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide opportunities to extend projects related to themes over a period of time• Provide opportunities for children to work on projects in groups• Be sensitive to children's emerging ability to compare their competencies to others (social comparison), which can negatively influence their self-esteem• Involve children in resolving conflicts when they occur between groups (girls and boys, cultural differences)• Respect cultural differences in the value placed on competition and cooperation• Encourage children to solve their problems and acknowledge their efforts
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Persistence and Attentiveness (Mastery, Motivation, Concentration). Goal 4: *Children sustain attention to tasks and show willingness to persist in order to complete an activity even with faced with challenges and frustration.*

Early Learning Guidelines	Birth to 8 months	6 to 18 months	16 to 38 months	36 to 60 months	60 months through Kindergarten	First, Second, and Third Grades
Developmental Task	Briefly sustain attention to caregiver's actions and objects as they are introduced and will try to reach and manipulate objects.	Focus briefly on activities they enjoy and return to them after distractions.	Increase their attention and will extend favorite activities by repeating them. Will persist in the face of difficulty and seek assistance to complete difficult tasks.	Increase object permanence abilities to anticipate future activities. Persist with more complex tasks, using more than one problem-solving strategy.	Maintain interest in activities and persist through challenges to complete project. Can complete projects in cooperation with peers or adults.	Develop models of problem solving based on previous experience that allows them to try different strategies to sustain and complete difficult problems.
Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hold attention of caregivers (smiles, babble, sustain eye-contact)• Can focus on a face or object from a wide variety of stimuli (watch their own face in mirror)• Direct attention towards objects by reaching, grasping, or staring at them• Examine a face, toy, or rattle for a brief period of time• Repeat simple motions or activities (swat at a mobile, consistently reach for objects)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Persist with a task or challenge (pulling up to a low table)• Return to a desired task even when distracted, such as banging a toy, or dumping a container• Remember where favorite toys are stored• Focus on the reader or story teller for brief periods of time	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Show interest in favorite activities over and over again• Complete simple projects (three to five piece puzzle, can stack blocks on top of one another)• Continue to try a difficult task for a brief period of time (can build a block structure for 3 to 5 minutes)• Insist on some choices (what to wear, completing a project)• Seek and accept assistance when encountering a problem• Listen and participate in story time (turning pages of book, using hand motions such as claps)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Focus on tasks of interest to them• Remain engaged in an activity for at least 5 to 10 minutes, at times• Complete favorite tasks over and over again• Manage tasks with sequences of three to four steps• Persist in trying to complete a task after previous attempts have failed (complete a puzzle, build a tower)• Use at least two different strategies to solve a problem• Use self talk to guide action when solving a problem• Participate in meal time with few distractions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maintain interest in a project or activity until finished, including multiple days• Set goals and follow through on plans, with assistance• Sustain attention while peers and adults are the focus of attention (pay attention during storytelling or "show and tell")• Work on a task over a period of time, leaving and returning to it (block structure)• Shift attention back to activity at hand after being distracted• Focus on projects despite distractions• Accept reasonable challenges and continue through frustration• Cooperate with a peer or adult on a task	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adapt in response to difficult problem• Develop models for problem solving based on prior experience• Try variations on previous schema for problem solving
Strategies for Caregivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Play with children individually every day• Facilitate play and activities between children• Provide space and times where children can play or work at tasks without interruptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide children with opportunities to explore different characteristics of an object (The toy has several parts; a face has eyes, ears, nose, and mouth.)• Observe children to learn which activities increase or sustain their interest• Provide opportunities for children to choose toys to play with and books to read• Provide opportunities for children to take reasonable and safe risks (to stretch for an object beyond reach)• Provide many opportunities for active exploration; discourage watching television or videos	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide time for children to engage in sustained activities, be on toddler time• Respond to children's cues to enhance opportunities to extend play and interactions• Respond to children's requests for assistance• Limit environmental distractions to help child sustain attention to activities (Turn off loud music and television while child plays in room.)• Talk with children about their activities using open-ended questions (How did you do that? Tell me more.)• Direct concerns about a children's behavior or development to medical or developmental expert (in partnership with families)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Be available and respond when children encounter problems, without being intrusive• Comment positively on children's persistence and concentration• Try children's suggested interventions when problems are encountered; talk with them about what worked and what did not• Ask what children would like to try first when solving problems• Help children focus attention (Look at this. I want you to pay attention to the story.)• Help children stay on task, break activity into manageable pieces, give visual and spoken cues, help return to tasks• Modify expectations for persistence for children with learning disabilities (Attention-deficit Hyperactivity Disorder)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide opportunities for children to set and pursue goals• Plan projects for children to work on over time (planting seeds and nurturing them to watch them grow)• Provide opportunities for children to take on activities and responsibilities that last more than one day (feeding the gerbil this week)• Provide adequate time and support for children to complete increasingly complex games or tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide sufficient time for closure and transition• Recognize children's differences in adaptive problem solving• Provide many and varied opportunities for children to use their own strategies to pursue goals, with adult assistance• Provide opportunities for children to work on projects in peer groups• Provide activities with different levels of complexity and varying time requirements

Persistence and Attentiveness (Mastery, Motivation, Concentration/Attention Control). Goal 5: *Children demonstrate an expanding ability to develop and carry out plans for intentional, goal-directed activities and show willingness to try increasingly complex tasks.*

Early Learning Guidelines	Birth to 8 months	6 to 18 months	16 to 38 months	36 to 60 months	60 months through Kindergarten	First, Second, and Third Grades
Developmental Task	Will respond to pleasurable experiences and repeat actions that stimulate pleasure. Will seek out and acquire desirable objects within their reach.	Carry out simple goals to obtain a desired object or activity.	Use many trial and error attempts to deliberately solve immediate problems and pursue a larger range of activities with assistance.	Develop schemas for how things work and will attempt more complex tasks requiring more complex problem-solving strategies.	Anticipate an activity in the future and sustain their activity using rules of the game and negotiation.	Develop plans for increasingly complex tasks and complete them autonomously, seeking adult and peer feedback.
Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wiggle, roll, crawl to get to a desired visible object• Show interest in objects presented to them• Show interest in facial expressions and talking	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Find their way to get desired object using two to three steps (push a chair to a counter, climb up, and reach for cookies)• Start to use tools to solve problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use many trial and error attempts at problem solving• Start to transfer problem-solving strategies across situations• Seek adult’s help in getting an object or solving a problem• See the world from their perspective	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Can wait briefly for desired object or turn and know they will have a turn• Develop analogical thinking—schemas for what has worked, what to try• Find hidden objects through searching in more than one place• Find hidden items in a picture	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Know that rules and negotiation will help then get a turn in a group of children• Want others to follow rules of games• Anticipate an activity in the future (After class, a friend comes to play and we will build with blocks and play outside.)• Use story narratives to plan, review, and fantasize	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• With adult and peer feedback, are able to plan and carry out activities within structured and unstructured settings• Increase the complexity of tasks they engage in• Seek feedback from adults and peers• Begin to separate the task/activity from their sense of self
Strategies for Caregivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Respond to infant’s attempt to reach and play with objects• Provide a variety of safe toys within infant’s reach to help them explore• Play with infants while they show interest in objects (describe the object and their actions and your own actions)• Talk to infants—sing songs and rhymes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support children’s efforts for problem solving and self-sufficiency• Provide safe experiences for children to explore indoor and outdoor environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Setup a safe physical environment for children to explore, try, and have successes• Allow enough time for toddlers to try and explore, including the natural world	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Help children understand sequences (What do we do first?)• Ask children why something happened• Extend children’s explanations and stories with open-ended questions• Encourage perspective taking	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Plan an environment for children’s self-sufficiency• Provide many and varied activities that children can access and play with by their own choice• Provide time for children to play with and complete activities of their choosing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understand individual ways of learning• Create an environment that allows for a range of experiences that are easier achieved or more complex• Provide opportunities to explore other cultures• Allow children to problem solve themselves and with peers, helping them when they get stuck (zone of proximal development)• Introduce new concepts and activities to stretch skills

Reflection and Interpretation. Goal 6. *Children show an expanding ability to change or adapt thought processes, including applying information and concepts previously learned to new situations, the ability to use skills in new ways, and adapting thought processes in response to changing or surprising situations.*

Early Learning Guidelines	Birth to 8 months	6 to 18 months	16 to 38 months	36- to 60 months	60 months through Kindergarten	First, Second, and Third Grades
Developmental Task	Interact with people and objects that are in their immediate range of motion.	Lengthen their play with physical objects, creating different outcomes by trial and error experimentation.	Expand on previous learning to evoke new experiences with people and objects in their familiar environment.	Take more risks by extending their previous learning to the exploration of new settings, people, and objects.	Consider multiple approaches to new situations and tasks. Cooperate with peers and adults to assess new situations and tasks.	Use increasingly complex mental models of how the world works, and increased perspective-taking skills result in more strategic problem solving in unusual situations. Increasingly use conventions and rules to interpret unusual situations.
Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Repeat simple motions or activities (mouth, objects, bang things)• Notice interesting objects and people in their environment• Track people and object by moving head as they move• Look to spot where interesting object was seen, after it disappears• Behave in a consistent way to elicit desired response (kicks a mobile)• Can pick out nuances of visual and vocal cues	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Throw, empty, dump, gesture• Recognize similarities and differences, categorize, and sort• Can adjust play that varies slightly (peek-a-boo with a variety of objects)• Experiment to see if similar objects will cause a similar response (shake stuffed animal in the same way as a rattle to hear noise)• Display recognition and excitement about a toy or game from previous day• Apply knowledge to new situations (bangs on bucket instead of drum)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enjoy repetition, stories, scripts• Are egocentric and have favorite objects that are hard to share• Substitute similar objects (stacks boxes like blocks)• Realize certain behaviors can precede events (If mom puts the pot on the stove, she is fixing something to eat.)• Alter behavior based on a past event and builds on it (I did this and it didn't work; I'll try this instead.)• Relate an experience today to one that happened in the past (I won't go near fence where big dog lives.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work within a group• Play with shared meaning and evolving scripts• Show interest by asking about new things and people around them• Like new experiences and toys that are unfamiliar• Tell others about events that happened in the past• Represent things in the environment with available materials, moving from simple to complex representations• Think out loud and talk themselves through a situation• Work out problems mentally, or remember past experience rather than trial and error	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Can engage in activities and solve problems cooperatively• Use a variety of methods to express thoughts and ideas (discussions, art activities)• Demonstrate long-term memory of meaningful events and interesting ideas• Can recognize others' feelings and begin to consider them in problem solving• Can apply past learning to new activities and object through trial and error testing out of hypotheses• Show interest in and ask many questions about new things and people• Want to solve problems on their own• Often prefer to choose their activities and are more self-sufficient	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are decentered and able to take multiple perspectives• Can consider the past, present, and future and reason about what might happen• Can imagine multiple solutions• Use multiple sources of information for further understanding• Can consider more than one element of something at the same time• Can generalize learning and use imagination in new settings and with new activities (effective problem solving)• Are more autonomous in problem solving
Strategies for Caregivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduce new toys, songs, and rhymes to infants• Facilitate play when they show interest in new objects• Have fun incorporating infant's body into songs and rhymes, such as lifting legs up and down with marching rhymes, playing pat-a-cake, etc.• Take them outside to enjoy nature and see new things	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide many and varied safe toys and objects (stacked plastic measuring cups) for children to play and experiment with• Rotate toys and objects out as children appear to lose interest in them• Sing songs and recite rhymes to children• Occasionally play music that includes rhythms and rhymes• Look at and talk about favorite picture books with children while they remain interested	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide many and varied safe toys and objects for children to play with ensuring there are enough duplicates to avoid competition• Allow a favorite object that the child does not have to share (transitional object, blanket, or stuffed animal)• Explain what is going to happen next during transition• Notice and articulate for child when they express a fear or look for a repeat experience• Read and sing rhymes daily• Read favorite book repeatedly• Rotate toys as children appear to lose interest, re-introducing them later will spark renewed interest• Provide ample time for free play with toys and objects• Provide experiences with nature and the outdoors	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide many and varied safe toys and activities for children to play with alone and in adult-mediated groups• Talk with children about what they have seen, heard, and done• Rotate toys as children appear to lose interest, re-introducing them later will spark renewed interest• Provide opportunities for children to explore nature and the outdoors• Provide time for and materials to process experiences and information• Help children remember experiences with photos, mementoes and found objects• Ask open-ended questions to encourage reflection (What if? How else...?)• Provide opportunities to explore nature and the outdoors• Expose children to differences in people and clarify understanding• Interpret a peer's intentions or point of view as part of conflict resolution	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide many and varied toys and activities for children to play with in groups and on their own• Make materials accessible for self-sufficiency and free choice and self expression• Provide time for children to engage in meaningful play• Talk with child about what has been see, heard, or done• Provide opportunities to recall past experiences in planning new activities and setting goals• Provide time to process experiences and information• Ask open-ended questions to encourage reflection• Help children recognize the emotions in their peers and talk through conflicts• Provide opportunities to engage group activities such as science and cooking projects• Expose children to different cultural traditions• Support child with special needs who may need clarification of others' motives and intentions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide many opportunities for children to explore more complex subjects and processes• Allow children to work in groups to solve problems• Allow children to come up with own solutions and to consider multiple solutions• Question children to help them see multiple solutions and ask children to talk about their thought process• Acknowledge children's imagination and abilities• Help children resolve conflicts with peers on their own• Provide opportunities for children to explore different cultures and new activities• Provide opportunities for hands-on learning of different processes (building, cooking, art, music, etc.)

Reflection and Interpretation. Goal 7. *Mediated by individual temperament, children learn to understand and appreciate individual style in approaching and interacting with the world, and they find individual ways to make meaning of interactions and relationships.*

Early Learning Guidelines	Birth to 8 months	6 to 18 months	16 to 38 months	36 to 60 months	60 months through Kindergarten	First, Second, and Third Grades
Developmental Task	Exhibit sleeping, feeding, waking cycles that are more regulated, reaching homeostasis. More coordinated interactions between parents and infants reflect reciprocal “goodness of fit.”	Explore familiar people, objects and situations with varying levels of adult influence and assistance.	Begin to take some risks exploring familiar people, objects, and situations with differing needs for adult assistance. Are more capable of coping with stressful situations.	Display different levels of initiative and confidence in exploring a wider variety of social and physical settings. Can recognize emotional states in themselves and others and problem solve around emotional issues with adult assistance.	Can recognize and identify a wider variety of emotions. They can better interpret complex emotional states and recover more easily from strong emotions with adult assistance.	Can better take the perspective of others and can support others appropriately. Negotiate within a group process that involves diverse ideas.
Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Merge with their families to create a functional unit• Have more regulated sleeping, feeding, and waking cycles, reaching homeostasis• Express temperamental indicators of regularity, intensity, persistence, sensitivity, adaptability, activity level, approach to newness, mood, and distractibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Begin to express temperamental traits• Respond to modeling (can copy hand-clapping)• Demonstrate unique responses to interactions; relationships are more evident• Visually and vocally checks in with caregiver—exhibit social referencing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrate uninhibited self-expression• Demonstrate some flexibility• Are open to externally driven interactions, relationships, and inhibitions• Begin to regulate strong emotional expression (tantrums, act impulsively)• Demonstrate some coping skills in the face of adversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Learn how to moderate intrinsic response• Have a sense of surprise and are learning to understand a shared experience• Begin to allow peers to impact how they see themselves• Explain and problem-solve issues of emotion (label emotions)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Begin to understand there is a variety of expressions and reactions to shared experiences (decentering)• Recover from strong emotions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Act on the behalf of others, action related to perspective taking• Are competent negotiators in a group process that involves diverse ideas• Show the ability to choose compatible playmates
Strategies for Caregivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recognize individual temperaments and needs among children• Be responsive and nurturing to individual needs rather than follow a strict schedule• Be willing to learn• Have a comfort level with the unknown, or ambiguity• Support children and mediate for them in stressful situations• Strive for “goodness of fit”	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide a variety of sensory experiences with a reassuring tone• React appropriately for the developmental level of children• Provide physical and emotional safety for children• Support children by mediating stressful situations through warmth and nurturing as children venture further from the caregiver• Strive for “goodness of fit”	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Start to recognize children's learning, coping, and reactive styles• Help children to identify (label) their emotions and those of others (emotional scaffolding)• Model appropriate behaviors and responses for children• Model language, labels, feelings, thoughts, and experiences for children• Support children's learning to adapt by mediating stressful situations for them	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recognize children's increasing level of complexity in emotional expressions and processing• Support children's learning to adapt by mediating stressful situations for them• Model language, labels, feelings, thoughts, and experiences for children	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recognize children's increasing level of complexity in emotional expressions and processing• Support children by mediating stressful situations and prompting children to reflect upon and interpret their distress	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Allow children to work out conflicts and problems, providing support as needed and reflection and debriefing to expand understanding• Provide alternative perspectives and options for future problem solving• Provide reassurance and safety for child in stressful situations• Be responsive to individual children's cares and needs

SUBDOMAIN: COGNITION AND COGNITIVE PROCESSES

Reasoning and Logic. Goal 8: *Children demonstrate awareness of cause and effect relationships.*

Early Learning Guidelines	Birth to 8 months	6 to 18 months	16 to 38 months	36 to 60 months	60 months through Kindergarten	First, Second, and Third Grades
Developmental Task	Increasingly aware of self and primary caregivers. Repeat actions for pleasurable outcome.	Use goal-oriented exploration; actively explore self, others, and objects; recognize the effect of actions on the environment.	Generalize their understanding of cause and effect to new people, objects, and settings, expanding exploration.	Predominately use logical problem solving. Are aware of and interested in simple causal relationships. Uses magical thinking.	Building on past experiences, express curiosity about cause and effect with people and objects and experiment to elaborate their understanding.	Are more confident in their notion about causal relationships, which become more reality based and elaborated through social conventions.
Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Look for or orient toward a dropped object or sound• Use sounds, gestures, and movements to impact the environment and interactions• Act on an object to make a pleasing sight sound or motion(kicks or swats mobile, continues to bat object to repeat sound)• Repeat actions many times to cause desired effect• Sustain brief interactions with caregiver support	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use variety of tools (containers, switches, doors)• Manipulate and use physical activity predominately• Use motor skills experiment with cause and effect• Use two to three step sequencing predominately (pushes chair to counter, climbs up)• Experiment with effects of own actions on objects and people• Use social referencing with caregivers• Begin to express an understanding of cause and effect• Understand “no” but doesn’t inhibit actions• Begin to understand meaning and language are linked to actions• Do not understand impact of actions on others (biting, pushing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observe others’ actions to see the effect they will have on objects and people• Experiment with effect of own actions on objects and people• Know playing with certain desirable or forbidden objects will get adult’s attention• Begin to express an understanding of cause and effect (It’s quiet because you turned off the radio.)• Understand “no” but can control actions• Use “why?” questions predominately	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify objects that influence or affect other objects (The food coloring makes the water blue.)• Ask “why” questions to show effort at understanding causation (If I do this, why does that happen?)• Explain the effects that simple actions may have on objects (It will be dark when you turn off the light.)• Recognize which element of an object causes the effect in simple relationships (The beads inside the box make the noise.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Structure experiments to see how changes in one factor influence changes in the others (plant seeds and put one in sunlight and one in dark rooms), with assistance• Attempt to explain how things might change, given changes in circumstances (When it’s cloudy, it might rain.)• Explain reasons why simple events occurred (Carlos isn’t here today because he got sick yesterday.)• Propose experiments to see what will happen	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use rule-based testing of social situations (telling on peers, “that’s not fair,” wanting rules for security and safety)• Become critical to scientific thinking and underlies conjecture, hypothesizing, and guessing
Strategies for Caregivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide a safe and stimulating environment for child to explore• Provide child with consistent responses, environments, and routines• Play turn-taking games with child (peek-a-boo)• Provide child with experiences and materials that demonstrate cause and effect relationships (place object on blanket, demonstrate to child how to pull blanket toward self to get the object)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrate and explain the relationships between things (If you throw your toy out of the crib, you can’t reach it.)• Understand that the child’s link between action and language is not well-formed (child cannot be held accountable for their actions-adult needs to be actively involved in modeling)• Explain what is happening while interacting with child	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide explicit explanations for cause and effect (When child touches something hot, you say “You can’t touch that burner because it is hot and will burn you.”)• Play with and manipulate different materials so child can see changes• Provide opportunities for child to experiment with objects to see outcomes (turning lights on and off)• Describe how objects change when acted on (batter turns to cake; water turns to ice)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide opportunities for child to play without adult guidance, discovering causal relationships• Engage child in activities that demonstrate cause and effect (cooking projects, planting seeds, and watching them grow)• Demonstrate, explain, and provide opportunities for child to explore cause and effect• Provide opportunities for child to engage in efforts to address the effects of local issues (pollution, littering)• Help child make connections about cause (actions) and effect when resolving social conflicts• Understand that social complexity can exceed child’s capacity to problem solve	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide opportunities for child to engage in cause-effect activities (freeze water with objects in it, observe how long it takes to melt)• Provide child with a variety of materials to create cause and effect experiments (explore together the steps needed to cook a meal)• Pose “what if?” questions to children• Understand that social complexity can exceed child’s capacity to problem solve• Demonstrate, explain, and engage child in taking steps to cause and outcome (explore together the steps needed to cook a meal)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use scaffolding, thinking by asking questions, or posing hypotheses• Clarify problem so that child can solve (What happens next?)• Provide opportunities for multistep experiments both indoors and outside• Integrate causality with scientific thinking• Provide a variety of open-ended materials for experimentation• Help develop lists and steps for complex activities such as cooking, event planning, and experiments

Concept Formation/Memory. Goal 9: *Children expand ability to recognize or recall people, events, and information excluding imitation, such as anticipation of routines, activities that have been experienced previously, and object permanence.*

Early Learning Guidelines	Birth to 8 months	6 to 18 months	16 to 38 months	36 to 60 months	60 months through Kindergarten	First, Second, and Third Grades
Developmental Task	Encode memory primarily in the sensory processes and objects, and people only exist when visible to the child.	Encode memory in sensory experiences, physical processes, routines, and relationships. Realize that objects exist for a short time when they are not seen.	Start to encode language in memory in addition to prior modalities; aware of separation and reunion. Object permanence becomes an emotional and cognitive task.	Connect current behavior and past experience through language and symbolism, facilitating increased mental processing of information.	Mediate current exploration and behavior increasingly by past experience; long-term memory of meaningful experience, and perspective taking emerge.	Interpret past behavior interpreted through conventions and current experience. Recall at will and learn through repetition.
Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Track people and objects by moving his/her head as adult or object moves• Smile and wiggle in response to family members• Start to enjoy bath• Behave in consistent ways to elicit desired response (kick a mobile)• Play games with primary caregiver that involve repetition (peek-a-boo)• Show surprise and delight by peek-a-boo• Encode memory primarily by smell, taste, touch	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Show signs of attachment to primary caregivers/parents by showing preference, or clinging to parent• Experiment to see if similar objects will cause similar responses (shake stuffed animal in the same way as a rattle to hear noise)• Display recognition and excitement about game or toys from previous day• Apply knowledge to new situations (bang on bucket instead of drum)• Recognize differences between familiar people and strangers• Anticipate return of face when playing peek-a-boo and trajectory of a moving object• Will look for hidden object after seeing it hidden/moved in two-to-three places• Will go look for a familiar toy or pet when asked• Use transitional object to support transitions and separations (favorite toy or blanket)• Memory still primarily sensory	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Substitute similar objects (stacks boxes like blocks)• Realize that behaviors can precede events (If mom puts the pot on the stove, she is going to cook something to eat.)• Alter behavior based on a past event and builds on it (I did this and it didn't work, so I will do this instead.)• Relate an experience today to one that happened in the past (hand-washing prior to meal time)• Look in several places for a desired object, or when asked to find object (Go see if your other shoe is under your bed.)• Enjoy hide and seek games• Begin to understand that a parent goes to work but will come home• Start to understand that objects are independent of self and own actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tell others about events that happened in the past• Represent things in environment with available materials, moving from simple to complex representations (recreate picture of a house, bridge, road with blocks)• Think out loud and talk themselves through a situation• Work out problems mentally rather than through trial and error• Can tell a story or recount an event from photograph of self and others (This is when we made a big tent, with boxes and blankets.)• Recognize objects may be in an unusual place• Able to find hidden object in a picture/puzzle• Understand that a parent goes to work but will come home• Can sequence three to six pictures or pieces of a sequence puzzle• Enjoy stories and songs with repeating phrases or events	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use a variety of methods to express thoughts and ideas (discussion, art activities)• Demonstrate long-term memory of meaningful events and interesting ideas• Describe or act out a memory of a situation or action• Seek information for further understanding• Use multiple sources of information to complete projects and acquire new information, with assistance• Plan activities and sets goals based on past experience• Demonstrate beginning understanding of what others are thinking, their intentions, or motivations• Collect objects from field trips or travels, such as rocks, shells, photos• Enjoy stories about the past or future	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrate increased understanding of what others are thinking, their intentions, or motivations• Plan activities and set goals based on past experience and increasingly complex thinking skills• Develop a concept of time and sequences• Use conventional methods of measuring time to aid memory• Use language to facilitates the encoding/retrieving of memory• Use rote memory as an academic tool• Keep a journal or portfolio of special events or art work• Ask about "what happened when"

Early Learning Guidelines	Birth to 8 months	6 to 18 months	16 to 38 months	36 to 60 months	60 months through Kindergarten	First, Second, and Third Grades
Strategies for Caregivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Play with child individually every day• Interact with child in consistent and predictable ways• Provide child with toys and objects that react to specifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reassure child and support both closeness and separation with caregiver/parent• Provide opportunities for child to try same action on different objects (shake a rattle, shake a stuffed animal, shake a ball)• Comment when child applies knowledge to new situations, using descriptive language• Sing songs with sequences or stories• Watch for activities that occur regularly (when the bus comes)• Display photos of child in familiar situations, doing familiar activities, and with family members	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Think “out loud” and talk about ideas with child using descriptive language (You remembered where the puzzle piece fits.)• Invite child to share thoughts and ideas about the world around him/her• Provide materials that are similar but produce different results (crayons, markers, paint)• Narrate child’s play to him/her by describing what you see and hear• Demonstrate, explain, and provide opportunities for child to think about and avoid negative or problem situations• Play safe, simple, hiding and finding games	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Talk with child about what he/she has seen, heard, or done• Provide child with time to process experiences and information• Help child remember experiences with photographs, mementos, and souvenirs• Ask open-ended questions that encourage reflection (What if...? “How else could you do this?)• Provide play interactions with other children that foster child’s understanding• Use photos to prompt routines such as hand washing, brushing teeth, going to bed• Sing songs and tell/read stories with repeating lines, or sequences of activities• Play “remember when” games, family stories	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide opportunities for child to express thoughts through a variety of methods• Provide opportunities for child to recall past experiences in planning new activities and setting new goals• Provide opportunities for child to share the lessons learned from his/her experiences (story time)• Support child with special needs who may have difficulty understanding others’ motives and intentions• Help children to understand children with disabilities differing actions and what they might represent or mean• Provide display space for collected items and encourage dictated labels or stories to explain significance• Ask about a certain trip or event, what happened, what came first	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support children’s autonomous exploration of a variety of activities• Provide many and varied examples of increasingly complex concepts such as time• Involve children in planning experiments and selecting themes and field trips• Encourage children to draw on past experience to set goals and find solutions to problems• Encourage children to work in groups and to play games• Introduce varied cultural experiences and customs• Read to children using books with increasing complexity• Encourage journals, photos, drawings, and collections to document travels or interests• Share both fiction and nonfiction books when figuring out problems or posing questions

Imitation. Goal 10: *Children’s emerging ability to imitate behaviors that have been observed.*

Early Learning Guidelines	Birth to 8 months	6 to 18 months	16 to 38 months	36 to 60 months	60 months through Kindergarten	First, Second, and Third Grades
Developmental Task	Sustain and replicate brief interactions and expressions.	Sustain and replicate interactions and expressions with more sequences and complexity.	Sustain and replicate interactions and expressions with more sequences and complexity. Begin foundational symbolic play.	Begin to use imitation as a foundation for symbolic play and complex sequencing.	Use fantasy and pretend play more elaborately and use more perspective taking and experimentation with cultural roles and competencies in cooperation with others.	Internalize imitation as they develop imagination.
Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Respond to adult facial expression with same expression (sticking out tongue, pursing lips)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Wave bye-byePlay child -like imitation games (clapping and marching, jumping to music)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Demonstrate a sequence of new behavior after observing another childImitate parent or caregiver’s familiar behavior or gestures (pulls clothes from dryer, puts hands on hips, or strikes a familiar poseUse imitation, which leads to functional play	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Can imitate more complex sequences of action (songs with gestures, movement games)Repeat phrases or plots from favorite books or moviesEnjoy songs with actions and words (Wheels on the Bus, folk songs with gestures)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Engage extensively in pretend role play with peers and alone with a variety of objectsNarrate their play and speak for dolls and other imagined people, taking on several roles in playLike games or songs with imitation (Simon Says)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Become interested in word play and rhymesAre interested in adults’ explanations of what they are doing (as authorities) rather than in imitating themCan imagine themselves in many different roles and explore them mentally
Strategies for Caregivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Provide the time, action, and physical supportInitiate reciprocal interactions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Provide scripts and cuesProvide the time, action, and physical supportPlay games with imitation and action “hop like a ...”Plan times for music and activities such as marching, clapping, drumming	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Provide tools, props, and opportunities for imitative tasks and behaviorUse actions, songs, finger playsIdentify imitation as separate from understandingUnderstand that media imitation can mask delays	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Encourage child to participate in everyday tasks (stirring, pouring, wiping up)Use longer action songs with sequences of motions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Provide many and varied experiences with music and artProvide many and varied pretend play materials, including objects and dress up clothesProvide opportunities to learn about different kinds of workProvide activities involving work that adults do, such as cooking, cleaning, raking leaves	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Expose children to many and varied adult models and roles (stories, visitors, field trips)Provide opportunities for children to re-enact historical or events or retell storiesProvide engaging literature rich with word play, rhymes, etc.Provide many and varied activities that draw on children’s imagination, including musical experience, literature, science, nature

Reasoning and Logic/ Problem Solving. Goal 11: *Children find multiple solutions to questions, tasks, problems, and challenges, including trial and error.*

Early Learning Guidelines	Birth to 8 months	6 to 18 months	16 to 38 months	36 to 60 months	60 months through Kindergarten	First, Second, and Third Grades
Developmental Task	Due to neurological immaturity, are not ready for reasoning. Do sustain increasingly lengthy interactions with caregiver support.	Actively explore familiar people, objects, and settings to observe outcomes; use goal-oriented exploration.	Begin to try new things with familiar people, objects, and settings to see what the consequences will be.	Are increasingly confident in interacting in a wider variety of social and physical settings and trying new things. Use emerging perspective taking to increase complexity of experimentation.	Can play more cooperatively in groups and experiment with new situations and environments. Bring past experience to bear when approaching problems.	Are more confident and strategic in interacting with people and objects in a variety of settings and under a variety of circumstances to solve problems and gain new experience.
Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reach for a toy or object that has rolled away• Seek assistance from caregiver to solve a problem by using vocalizations, facial expressions, or gestures	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use active exploration and trial and error to figure out how things work• Use objects as a means to an end (use a bucket to transport blocks from one room to another, use spoon to reach for food)• With improving concentration, spend longer time exploring objects• Are predominately egocentric	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Try several methods to solve a problem before asking for assistance• Communicate to request assistance• Solutions are often not reality based• Use solutions that tend to reflect the child's own personal experience and perspective• Are predominately use egocentrism in problem solving• Become more persistent in trying to solve tasks on their own	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explore various ways to solve a problem and select one option• Seek assistance from another child or adult to solve problems• Modify actions based on new information and experiences (change block structure when the tower continues to falls)• Use magical thinking to influence solutions to problems (Child thinks inanimate objects have intentions.)• With emerging perspective taking, think of multiple situations in problem solving• Solve an increasing number of problems within everyday activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work in a group to find a solution, building on the group's problem-solving strategies• Demonstrate understanding of when something might be a problem or challenge (This puzzle's going to be hard to do.)• Can identify some strategies to solve a problems or start a complex task• Can explain part or all of the problem when asking for help• Can try several strategies to solve a problem, though might want help from peer or adult• Solve increasingly complex problems and an increased number of problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase ability to identify problems independently and to generate multiple solutions• Use and develop more strategies• Work with and negotiate with peers independently• Use more reality-based problem solving• Enjoy figuring out manageable problems• Like "fixing things" and feelings of competence
Strategies for Caregivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Respond to child's signals for assistance• Provide different materials to engage child	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide opportunities for child to work out problems with and without assistance• Demonstrate, explain, and engage child in trying things in different ways (stack blocks of different shapes and sizes, trying different combinations-square blocks on bottom, then round blocks on bottom)• Positively acknowledge when child tries new things	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Talk out loud, or otherwise demonstrate possible solutions, while problem solving• Play games that have many solutions• Sequentially work through a problem with child to find the solution• Provide opportunities for child to work out problems with and without assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Be available to assist child with challenges, questions, and tasks to solve• Demonstrate several alternatives to solving a problem• Guide child through the problem-solving process• Apply problem-solving process to social problems at child's level (Enrique and you both want to paint at the easel. What needs to happen for you to share the easel and paint together?)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pose solvable problems to child and provide opportunities for child to find solutions• Present the pros and cons of different solutions, encouraging child to help identify the best solution• Provide opportunities for child to work with other children and adults to find solutions to the problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Take an interest in the child's approaches to problem solving and reinforce strategic and positive approaches• Be available, if needed, but do not interfere in the process• Provide opportunities for child to work with other children and adults to find solutions to the problems

Reasoning and Logic/Problem Solving. Goal 12: *Children expand abilities for conjecture, hypothesizing, and guessing. Their ability expands to processing information, anticipating or predicting what might happen or what is likely to happen; ability to render an educated guess about something that is not necessarily a reflection of a pattern.*

Early Learning Guidelines	Birth to 8 months	6 to 18 months	16 to 38 months	36 to 60 months	60 months through Kindergarten	First, Second, and Third Grades
Developmental Task	Due to neurological immaturity, are not yet ready for hypothetical reasoning. Can repeat actions to get desired effects.	Actively explore and act on familiar people, objects, and settings to achieve familiar pleasant outcomes.	Lengthen their exploration to repeat pleasant consequences with familiar people, objects, and settings.	Are more confident in testing their ideas about how things work in a wider variety of social and physical settings.	Can play more cooperatively in groups and systematically test their ideas about how things work. Draw on past experience and increasing awareness of others.	Become more autonomous and confident in their ability to realistically identify problems and find solutions in social and physical settings.
Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Look for or orient toward a sights and sounds• Can get fist to mouth for self soothing• Use sounds, gestures, and movements to impact the environment and interactions• Repeat actions many times to cause desired effect (kicks or swats mobile, continues to bat at object to repeat sound)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Engage in goal-directed behavior and show persistence to get a desired object• Base problem solving in exploration and trial and error with objects	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Experiment with effect of own actions on objects and people• Observe others' actions to see the effect they will have on objects and people• Need adult help or explanation for problem (may use social referencing)• Savor repetition• Start to see how one thing leads to another	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ask questions to understand why something happens• Explain the effects that simple actions have and their outcomes• Recognize which object or element of an object causes the effect in simple relationships• Answer "what-next" questions• Use self-talk when solving a difficult problem• Acquire the ability to hold more than one attribute in mind• Become aware that other people can have different ideas or thoughts from their own• Can categorize objects into classes• Change from magical thinking to understanding causation and planned actions• Gain understanding of space and time to begin planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Structure experiments to see how changes in one factor influence changes in others• Explain how one change can lead to another• Explain how simple events occur• Setup and pursue purposeful experimentation, trying out different solutions• Build an awareness of other people's points of view and feelings• Can hold more than one attribute in mind at once (teacher can also be a parent)• Move from magical thinking to reasons for events• Understand difference between live, not alive ,and dead• Understand problem-solving process includes classifying and reframing within co-constructed meaning• Use analogical thinking to allow transfer of problem-solving strategies to new situations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Can transfer and generalize some kinds of problem-solving patterns and schemas to new situations, and predict outcomes• Have clearer understanding of other people's actions and emotions as separate from own• Can predict intent of other child's actions• Use problem-solving process, which includes classifying and reframing within co-constructed meaning• Use problem solving, which includes planning and mental representations of tasks and are able to focus on the most relevant information• Develop the capacity for purposeful experimentations and plan for a range of solutions• Can delay gratification to find a solution
Strategies for Caregivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Respond to child's signals for assistance• Provide different materials to engage child (a mobile, infant gym, rattles)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support the child's new found mobility• Recognize child's attempts at independence and curiosity and appropriately support those attempts• Be aware of safety and allow exploration in a safe environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide explicit explanations for cause and effect• Play with and manipulate different materials so child can see changes• Provide opportunities for child to experiment with objects to see outcomes• Describe and anticipate the outcome of their actions• Enrich the environment in response to the child's interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use child-centered play for discovering cause and effect• Engage in activities that allow the child to discover cause and effect• Demonstrate and explain, cause and effect activities, and ask extending questions (What do you think will happen next?)• Develop an understanding of the child's actions and the effect on his/her surroundings• Help child know when to use "w" questions• Enrich the environment with enough open-ended materials and time for exploration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Engage child in experimentation; ask predicting questions• Provide child with a variety of materials to create experiments• Demonstrate, explain, and engage child in taking steps to cause an outcome• Recognize importance of children working in small groups or teams	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recognize child's accomplishments• Ask child to explain what they were thinking in relationships to activities, problems, experiments, situations• Recognize importance of children working in small groups or teams

Reasoning and Logic/Critical and Analytic Thinking. Goal 13: *Children compare, contrast, examine and evaluate experiences, thought processes, tasks and events, building on prior knowledge.*

Early Learning Guidelines	Birth to 8 months	6 to 18 months	16 to 38 months	36 to 60 months	60 months through Kindergarten	First, Second, and Third Grades
Developmental Task	Due to neurological immaturity, are not ready for logical thought. Can sustain interactions with caregiver support.	Lengthen active exploration of familiar people, objects, and settings to experience new outcomes.	Begin to take some risks and actively explore new ways of doing things with familiar people, objects, and settings to achieve additional positive consequences.	Are eager to explore a wider variety of people, objects, and situations and can use past experience and observations in new ways in new situations.	Think about problems and situations more systematically and take the perspective of others. Use more complex reasoning about actions and events.	Think systematically and logically and can confidently apply their reasoning abilities in a range of social and physical settings, and in cooperation with others.
Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shake stuffed animal or object in same way as rattle to hear noise• Watch separate body parts, their movement, and experiment with control of their movements• Imitate actions, gestures, and sounds• Explore objects in many different ways• Sustain gaze or track object• Observe activities• Notice changes to familiar places and people• Describe new toys and objects to examine, compare, and contrast• Describe comparisons during playful interactions• Provide opportunities to examine his/her environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use objects as intended• Understand how familiar objects are used in combination (spoon in bowl, socks on feet)• Distinguish sounds and combinations of sounds• Follow the edges of objects in a space, such as a blanket, bed, or room• Recognize different facial expressions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Generalize ideas based on past experiences (watches caregiver blow on hot food before eating, then blows on food, hot or cold, at next meal)• Connect objects and ideas (broom for sweeping; swimsuit for swimming)• Label that a person's apparel is based on the weather outside (wearing a sweater means it is cold outside.)• Imitate behavior seen in another place and time• Notice and describe how items are the same or different• Use actions or words to justify choices• Make choices when given options (which toy to play with)• Articulate changes noticed in familiar places and people• Identify differences between own and others' work	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Apply new information or vocabulary to an activity• Use information gained through one modality and apply it to new context via another modality (try to build a tower of blocks like the one seen in a book, draw pictures after a field trip)• Generate a strategy based on one learning event and extend it to a new learning opportunity (learn that mixing red and yellow paint makes orange, later try coloring yellow crayon over red crayon)• Show understanding same and different• Recognize and label aspects of an event• Sort objects based on attributes, such as shape, size, and color• Compare experiences with or without out prompting• Explain simple benefits and/or drawback of choosing one course of action with/out prompting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Restate understanding of a situation or problem in own words• Explain that a person stays the same, although appearance is changed through masks, costumes, or makeup• Understand that words are made up of letters• Recognize the difference between squares and rectangles and circles and ovals• Organize objects by more than one common characteristic• Use comparative words• Compare the main characters or events of stories• Describe experiences using comparative language• Consider peers' perspectives when making decisions• Explain how he/she makes decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Become capable of mentally combining, separating, ordering, and transforming information and objects• Understand that such physical aspects of objects as size, quantity, and number remain the same even when some aspects of their appearances have changed• Can consider more elements of a problem at the same time (They can think about alternatives when solving problems.)• Can mentally retrace their steps if they want to• Can play games with rules• Have increased ability to consider both behavior and psychological states and better interpret other people's intentions• Spend more time in peer groups• Can think about past, present, and future states of objects and people• Organize collections according to multiple criteria (sorting baseball cards according to league, team, and position)

Strategies for Caregivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide toys and objects of different textures that respond to actions of child (rattles, squeeze toys, cloth toys, and soft balls)• Play games with child that support understanding of object permanence (peek-a-boo, hide and seek)• Provide a stimulating environment for child to explore• Respond to child's behavior in an interactive way• Play turn-taking games (peek-a-boo)• Demonstrate and explain the relationships between actions• Provide experiences and materials that demonstrate cause and effect relationships (place object on blanket, demonstrate how to pull blanket toward self to get the object)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrate, explain, and engage child in activities that show how different experiences relate to one another (Your sweater goes on over your head just like your shirt goes on over your head.)• Use photos and objects to talk about child's past experiences (photos or toy animal after an outing to the park)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use child's home language, experience and culture to make connections to new experiences• Engage child in routine activities, explaining the whys (We vacuum the floor to clean up the dirt.)• Help child make generalizations (If it is sunny here, it will probably be sunny at school.)• Acknowledge child when a past event is recalled and used as the basis for a choice• Demonstrate, explain, and engage child in comparing objects' size, shape, and other characteristics• Demonstrate, explain, and engage child in discussing what he/she likes and does not like about experiences• Provide opportunities for imitating art or block creations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Engage the child in activities and interactions that make connections by recalling past learning and events (engage child in "remember when..." games and discussions)• Demonstrate, explain, and engage child in activities that recall past events and relate what he/she learned from it• Engage the child in generalizing by asking open-ended questions (Where else would this work? What if...?)• Provide opportunities to sort objects for fun or as a chore• Play games where the child identifies similarities and differences in the environment• Engage in role playing activities• Read or tell stories and talk about the characters' similarities and differences• Use open-ended questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Engage the child in activities and interactions that use known strategies in new situations• Demonstrate, explain, and engage child in activities that explore questions and guide him/her toward appropriate solutions• Invite child to expand on what he/she meant by a certain response (Tell me more about why you said that.)• Engage child in discussing what he/she thinks another child meant by a given response (Why do you think Josie did that?)• Evaluate pros and cons of a decision• Evaluate a problem, task, activity and its possible solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide children many and varied activities and objects to stimulate their new abilities in problem solving• Allow children to arrive at their own conclusions through experimentation• Let children work in groups to generate multiple ideas and solutions• Share stories about a variety of people and cultures• Share stories with moral dilemmas and encourage children to generate multiple solutions• Ask children to relate their own stories• Listen to children's explanations of things and ask questions to explore alternate solutions• Provide learning games• Introduce history and compare to the present and future• Provide opportunities to collect and classify objects
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Representational Thought and Play. Goal 14. *Children participate in exploratory play. Play behaviors are directed at exploring objects or materials in the absence of pretend or make believe, including functional play, sensory play (sand/water), and physical exploration.*

Early Learning Guidelines	Birth to 8 months	6 to 18 months	16 to 38 months	36 to 60 months	60 months through Kindergarten	First, Second, and Third Grades
Developmental Task	Use sensory exploration.	Use sensory motor skills with some imitation, not goal directed; refine movement using large and small muscles.	Try new ways of doing things and begin to take some risks.	Explore materials and actions.	Sustain work through increased personal interest and confidence.	Develop sense of self competence or self confidence that colors relationships to projects, games, and work.
Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gather information through the senses (mouthing, grasping, reaching)• Use more than one sense at a time (use sight, touch, taste, and hearing by examining and shaking a toy)• Observe objects in the environment for a brief period of time• Initiate familiar play scheme banging objects, grabbing spoon	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lack sequencing, not abstract• Use all five senses to examine different objects with attention to detail• Enjoy movement and motor play• Observe and manipulate objects• May engage in self-talk while playing• Engage in reciprocal play with balls or throwing toys• Enjoy filling and dumping, pushing and pulling activities• Enjoy movement games with caretaker (pat-a-cake, peek-a-boo)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use sorting and classifying• Observe and manipulate objects to identify similarities or differences• Use simple tools (scoops, funnels, shovels, buckets)• Explore and play with sand, mud, and water• Like hiding and finding games• Like jumping, climbing, and chase games• Play in front of a mirror• Stack, build, and knock down blocks• Play with malleable materials like play dough, clay, art materials• Start playing with wagons, tricycles, push toys• Initiate play with another child through gestures, offering toy, smiling, and eye contact• Construct using blocks, Legos® and other manipulatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use sorting, classifying, and seriation and patterning• Climb, swing, and perform body tricks• Throw, catch, and kick balls• Play with a variety of tools, hammers, saws, shovels, levers• Play with wheeled toys tricycles, scooters, wagons• Use art materials to make functional objects• Construct with Legos®, manipulative toys	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Elaborate block construction• Use rules and boundaries in representational building• Experiment with balance, ramps, pulley and other tools when block building, constructing, or manipulating objects• Enjoy taking apart /deconstructing to gain understanding (gears, old sewing machine)• Work to replicate a building, object, or event through drawing/painting or block building• Climb, slide, run, kick, and jump• Organize games that combine sports and skills• May reinterpret a game or sport• Enjoy making and inventing using adult tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop plans and models that can be built• Like in physical activities and organizing games with rules• Play team sports• Make inventions• Like building projects, often with peers• Can work in a group or on team projects• Test self with practice and training; will practice a specific skill
Strategies for Caregivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Engage in playful interactions• Understand sensorimotor development and provide stimulating objects and activities• Provide toys and experiences which appeal to all senses• Engage in reciprocal play such a peek-a-boo, hand clapping, stretching, and moving songs and games	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide a safe environment for exploring and movement• Engage in games with passing and rolling balls and soft toys• Explain what is occurring and what comes next during everyday routines• Provide an array of play objects that meet child's current development• Play music, sings, and dances with children	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide a safe environment for exploring and movement• Provide opportunities both indoors and outdoors for physical activities such as climbing, jumping, dancing, and movement both alone and with peers• Provide tactile materials for exploration (sand, water play dough)• Provide tools and opportunities for digging, pouring, stacking, picking up• Rotate toys and provide enough to avoid some conflicts• Play music, sing songs, move, and dance with children	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide manipulative toys for sorting, classifying, and arranging in groups and sequences by attribute• Understand functional play and its relationship to math and science foundations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enrich and structure environment (block area with extensive shapes and number of blocks; provide block props and raw materials)• Ask clarifying questions to extend play or overcome frustration• Help groups of children negotiate rules and fairness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ask questions to further exploration and experimentation• Limit electronic games so physical and exploratory play occurs• Provide time and space for indoor and outdoor exploration• Support rule and fairness negotiations• Support children who find access to group play difficult

Representational Thought and Play. Goal 15: *Children participate in pretend or symbolic play. Children gain increasing ability to pretend or make-believe, such as taking on roles, pretending to have objects that are not present, and using objects as substitutes for real objects in play. Through symbolic lay and maturation, children come to distinguish between fantasy and reality.*

Early Learning Guidelines	Birth to 8 months		6 to 18 months	16 to 38 months	36-to 60 months0	60 months through Kindergarten	First, Second, and Third Grades
Developmental Task	Sustain brief interactions with caregiver support.	Use sensory motor objectives functionally and evolve into using sensor motor objects symbolically.	Are able to use objects symbolically and with greater abstraction and shows a growing capacity for imaginative involvement.	Use elaborate abstracted plots, shared scripts, multiple sequences and roles with emerging fantasy.	Use elaborate fantasy play, can distinguish fantasy from reality. Negotiate scripts and characters.	Use elaborate fantasy play and can distinguish fantasy from reality.	
Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enjoy frolic play with caregivers• Coordinate body and visual cues with caregiver• Enjoy games like peek-a-boo and hand clapping	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use objects functionally• Use objects symbolically; use simple abstraction (a stick for a gun, block for phone)• Make animal sounds• Begin make-believe play (rocking or feeding a baby doll)• Begin to imitate adults and older children• Build capacity for imaginative involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explore the child’s experience by taking on family roles from within the family. Use simple, not elaborate, forms• Move solitary play to parallel play; begin cooperative play• Use props in pretend play (dolls, animals, trucks, objects)• May have an imaginary friend• React to people in costume as if they are the characters they portray• React to puppets as if they are real and not extensions of an adult or another child• May use play to address some fears• Initiate play with another child through gestures, offering a toy, smiling and eye contact• Use more elaborate play (animals go to the barn; babies are fed and put to bed)• Initiate favorite play themes with peer or adult• Start giving emotions and language to dolls and other play characters	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explore experience by taking on familiar roles in the home and community (firefighters, restaurant, doctor’s office)• Take on pretend roles and situations, using the appropriate language, tone, and movements (pretend to be a baby, crawling on the floor and making baby sounds)• Engage in complex make-believe play (theme-oriented play that involves multiple characters and settings)• Make connections between characters in books, stories, or movies, with people in real-life• Question if characters in books, family and traditional oral stories, and movies are real or not• Believe objects, events, and characters can be “magic” or have “powers”• Understand that conflict can arise from “misread script”• Can return to favorite play themes with friends• Can “play out” social and emotional issues (power, loss, fears)• Use block and dramatic play areas for imaginative settings and extended play• Use dramatic play to recreate a real situations with self involvement• Extend and consolidate understanding through play	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explain if a story is real or make-believe, when prompted• Understand and express when fantasy is influencing actions (I was just pretending to do that.)• Recognize that some characters, places, and objects in books, movies, television shows, and some family and traditional oral stories are not real• Start to become less object dependent and more abstract in play• Engage in games with rules, can spend more time negotiating rules and scripts than in actual play• Use block play to create and recreate experiences• Use block building for both real and pretend scenarios and know the difference• Express own ideas through dramatic play• May have favorite and recurring play themes• Can transform written stories into dramatizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Engage in games with formalized rules sometimes based on shared current culture characters or movies• Can formalize plots and actions into presentations as plays or puppet shows• Understand clear distinctions between what is real and what is fantasy, although might argue with peer about degree or possibility	
Strategies for Caregivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Engage baby in playful interactions–smiles, gentle tickles, face-making.• Watch for child’s signals to look and engage in interactions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Expose child to make-believe stories and songs from a variety of cultures that describe fantasy• Demonstrate and engage child in making a variety of animal sounds• Recognize child’s cues to engage in play• Help coordinate and explain children’s often vague cues to initiate play to other children• Support social referencing with child to engage in play with adult of other child• Provide props and opportunities for imaginative play	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Participate in child’s sense of imagination by engaging in make-believe play, with child leading• Dispel child’s fears that result from confusion over fantasy and reality• Discuss child’s dreams, ideas, and imagination with him/her• Allow child to have imaginary friends• Scaffold children’s inclusion of peers into complex dramatic play scenarios• Read fiction and nonfiction books and share family and traditional oral stories with child and discuss how they are different• Provide ample time and props for imaginative play	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Engage the child in activities and interactions that develop fantasy characters while helping them differentiate between make-believe and reality• Help child distinguish between cartoons, puppets, characters in books and movies, and real people• Provide environment and time for dramatic play• Scaffold entrance into dramatic play for children who need support to join play• Clarify scripts and roles as part of conflict resolution	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Engage the child in activities using make-believe (tell a story and engage child in making up the ending)• Demonstrate, explain, and engage the child in activities and interactions that identify real characters, places, and objects in books, movies, television shows and family and traditional oral stories• Provide ample time and a wide variety of props for complex dramatic play• Serve as “scribe” for child to dictate a story or narrative about a scenario or structure		

Representational Thought and Play. Goal 16: *Children represent experiences and thought through symbolic representation such as movement, drawing, singing/vocalizing, and play.*

Early Learning Guidelines	Birth to 8 months	6 to 18 months	16 to 38 months	36-to 60 months	60 months through Kindergarten	First, Second, and Third Grades
Developmental Task	Due to neurological immaturity, are not yet ready for representational thought.	Predominately use presymbolic play.	Begin to use symbolic expression.	Use more complex symbolic expression.	Use elaborate symbolic representation.	Prefer to use more individualized symbolic expression.
Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Vary intonation their voices• Look for disappearing objects• Like peek-a-boo• Pull cloth off of face as part of a peek-a-boo game, giggle	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Draw or scribble and explain what the drawing is• Experiment with new uses for familiar objects• Provide a simple description of a person or object that is not present (child barks when asked what noise the dog makes)• Works on object permanence, like hiding and finding games, peek-a-boo• React-s to mental images of objects or events (claps hands when told aunt/uncle is coming to visit)• Identify symbols for familiar objects correctly• Make animal noise and look to caregiver for recognition	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Offer brief explanations of drawings• Express emotion and experience through movement, drawing, music, or singing• May use self talk in play or painting/drawing• May tell stories about an experience or event• May scribble and call it writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide a complex description of a person or object that is not present (Child describes the dog is black, soft, and runs around; child gestures to show how big.)• Use symbols or pictures as a representation of oral language• Use objects to represent real items in make-believe play• Recognize objects, places, and ideas by symbols (recognize which is the men's room and which is the women's room by looking at the stick figure symbols)• Use creative means to express emotions when vocabulary is inadequate• May use shapes and letters to "write messages"	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Combine drawing and art expression with words• Use art, music, and movement to express self and feeling that are beyond verbal expression• Respond to books and pictures that express emotions and social roles with empathy or association• Represent simple objects through drawings, movement, mime and three-dimensional constructs• Use physical objects to demonstrate vocabulary (create two piles of blocks to demonstrate "more" and "less")• Independently choose new and different materials to represent original thoughts, ideas, and feelings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Can recognize self or own feelings as being similar to a character in a book, movie, or play• May have an artistic or active body means of expressing emotion and thoughts• Can take a different physical perspective when drawing or map drawing (can draw both a floor plan "bird's eye view" and an elevation or frontal view) and know they both represent the same object
Strategies for Caregivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Play peek-a-boo and games that engage child in reciprocal play• Provide literal pictures and books and talk about simple features (baby's nose, the dog)• Sing and move with baby	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Engage in simple reciprocal games with sounds and gestures• Ask "can you find" or "show me" questions when looking at books• Play "where is your nose," "where is your eye" games. Can later ask in reference to own body and photographs• Watch for child's cues and sounds for pretend child initiating play• Provide painting and drawing materials and time and supervise exploration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide opportunities and materials for drawing, painting and play dough activities in a small group; encourage talk• Play music and suggest movement (Jump like a rabbit, fly like a bird, make a noise like...)• Do finger plays and songs with movement with children	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide opportunities for child to engage in symbolic play (act happy, imitate a sad puppy)• Provide opportunities for children to draw pictures of people, feelings, family, animals and object• Tell stories without pictures and encourage child to visualize, imagine, and express what he/she feels• Identify and point out symbols during daily activities, demonstrating and explaining what they mean• Encourage child to draw a story, with caregiver as "scribe," writing dictated words. Dictates the story and makes the illustrations• Read stories and provide props for dramatizing the plot (Three Billy Goats Gruff, and make a block bridge)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Engage child in creating symbols to represent familiar objects (What would a symbol for your bed look like?)• Provide opportunities for child to participate in culture specific representational activities (storytelling, oral history, dance, songs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide stories that have more than one meaning and talk about multiple meanings with children• Provide folk tales and cultural stories for dramatic presentations or artistic representation• Provide opportunities for perspective taking when drawing, building, and creating, including some models• Use map making and symbol drawing sequences (story pictures) as means of extending children's thinking and perspective taking